Problems faced by Rural/Agricultural and unorganised workers

2099. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether any study has been made by Government on the problems faced by rural/agricultural and unorganised sector workers;

(b) if so, the details of major problems faced by such workers;

(c) whether Government propose to extend labour laws to cover such workers;

(d) if so, the details of the proposal; and

(e) what other measures Government propose to take to safeguard interests of such workers?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (DR. SATYANARAYAN JATIYA): (a) to (c) Government have been conducting Rural Labour Enquiries at regular intervals on a quinquennial basis alongwith General Employment and Unemployment Surveys of the National Sample Survey Organisation. The major problems faced by workers in rural/agricultural and unorganised sector are non-payment of minimum wages, continuous employment for whole year and poor working conditions etc.

The Government have enacted a number of labour laws for protection of workers' rights and their welfare; both for organised and unorganised workers. Some of these laws are, the Minimum Wages Act, 1948. the Equal Remuneration Act, 1976, the Payment of Gratuity Act, 1972, the Contract Labour (Regulation & Abolition) Act, 1970, the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976, the Beedi and Cigar Workers (Conditions of Employment) Act, 1966 the Inter-State Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1979, the Beedi Workers' Welfare Fund Act, 1976 etc. Workers engaged in iron ore, manganese ore, chrome ore, limestone, dolomite and mica mines, cine industry and beedi industry are also covered by the various welfare programmes undertaken under the concerned welfare funds. State Governments have also launched insurance and social security schemes covering large number of workers engaged in specific activities like handloom weavers, rikshaw pullers, etc. Improvement in quality of employment and conditions of work of workers in these unorganised/informal sector has been and continues to be a matter of prime concern for the Government.

As regards fresh policy initiatives, the Central Government have enacted the Building and Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1996 to protect the interest of workers engaged in construction industry which constitutes the second largest single activity, after agriculture, employing unorganised workers. It is also the endeavour of the Government to augment the existing measures and to provide welfare measures and to extend legislative protection to more and more workers in the unorganised sector.

Recommendations of SLC

2100. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) what are the major recommendations of the Standing Labour Committee at its 35th session held in New Delhi recently;

(b) whether SLC has expressed concern at the lack of action on the proposed amendments to the Sick Industrial Companies Act, 1985; and

(c) what is the Government's stand on SLG's recomendations and the pending amendments to the Act?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (DR. SATYANARAYAN JATIYA): (a) The 35th Session of the Standing Labour Committee discussed various issues and